

**WHAT WE CLAIM IS:**

1. A method for providing a call waiting priority alert service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising the steps of:

associating at least one priority code with a telephone number of the telephone line;

receiving a call from a calling party while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

soliciting from the calling party a priority code;

determining whether the priority code matches the at least one priority code;

playing a priority alert signal associated with the priority code to interfere with the first communication session; and

establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the priority code is unique to the calling party.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the priority code is provided by the subscriber to the calling party and other priority callers.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the priority alert signal is a regular call waiting tone.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of playing an announcement for the calling party if the calling party does not provide any priority code.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of playing an announcement for the calling party if the priority code provided by the calling party does not match the at least one priority code.

7. A method for providing a priority call waiting services to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising the steps of:

associating the telephone line with a plurality of priority codes;

assigning a priority alert signal to each of the plurality of priority codes;

receiving a call from a calling party while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

soliciting from the calling party a priority code;

determining whether the priority code matches any of the plurality of priority codes;

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playing a priority alert signal assigned to the priority code if the priority code matches one of the plurality of priority codes; and

establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes is associated with a priority level.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the calling party is provided by the subscriber with more than one of the plurality of priority codes.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein each of the more than one of the plurality of priority codes represents a different priority level.

11. A system for providing a priority call waiting alert service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the system comprising:

a service switching point in communication with the telephone line, wherein the service switching point is adapted to detect incoming calls intended for the subscriber when the subscriber is already engaged in a first communication session with a third party, and

a service control point in communication with the service switching point, wherein the service control point is adapted to review information associated with the subscriber,

wherein when the service switching point detects an incoming call intended for the subscriber from a calling party while the subscriber is already engaged in the first communication session with the third party, the service switching point launches a query comprising a subscriber number of the subscriber,

wherein when the service control point receives the query, the service control point instructs the service switching point to solicit a priority code from the calling party without interfering with the first communication session,

wherein the service control point instructs the service switching point interrupts the first communication session with a priority alert signal if the priority code supplied by the calling party is recognized by the service control point,

wherein the service switching point then suspends the first communication session, and establishes a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the service switching point is provisioned with a trigger.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the trigger is a terminating busy/no answer trigger.

14. The system of claim 11, wherein the priority alert signal is a regular call waiting tone.

15. A method for providing a call waiting priority alert service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising the steps of:

associating at least one priority code with a telephone number of the telephone line in a database accessible to a service control point;

receiving at a service switching point a call from a calling party while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

soliciting from the calling party a priority code;

determining whether the priority code matches the at least one priority code;

playing a priority alert signal associated with the priority code to interfere with the first communication session; and

establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the service switching point comprises a trigger that is associated with the telephone line.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the trigger is one of a termination attempt trigger and a terminating busy/no answer trigger.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein the priority code is unique to the calling party.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein the priority code is one of several priority codes available to the calling party and wherein each of the several priority codes represent a different priority level.

20. A method for providing a priority call waiting services to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising the steps of:

associating the telephone line with a plurality of priority codes;

assigning a priority alert signal to each of the plurality of priority codes;

receiving a call at a service switching point from a calling party while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

soliciting from the calling party a priority code;

determining whether the priority code matches any of the plurality of priority codes;

playing a priority alert signal assigned to the priority code if the priority code matches one of the plurality of priority codes; and

establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes is associated with a priority level.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the calling party is provided by the subscriber with more than one of the plurality of priority codes.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein each of the more than one of the plurality of priority codes represents a different priority level.